# Dromana Secondary College Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Dromana Secondary College by telephoning 03 5987 2805.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

(a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
(b) expectations for positive student behaviour
(c) support available to students and families
(d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Dromana Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Dromana Secondary College is located on the Mornington Peninsula, approximately 85km south of Melbourne. The college has a student population of around 1750. Students are bused in from all parts of the Mornington Peninsula, with an anticipated 20 primary schools providing Year 7 students each year. The college has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1012, (the

National Average is 1000), which reflects a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds within the student population. A high percentage of students come from families of an English-speaking background.

Dromana College has worked extremely hard in recent years to establish itself as an educator of choice within the local area. We pride ourselves on providing a safe and orderly environment and on maintaining a culture where students willingly embrace our clearly defined values of respect, responsibility, integrity and personal best. Building an outstanding learning and teaching program upon these foundations has then become the ongoing focus of the college. Literacy and Numeracy skills are whole school priorities, and our commitment to developing these skills within all Learning Domains and subjects is shared by all staff members across the college. Dromana College is also committed to ensuring that all students are able to access ICT on a 1:1 basis, through our Notebook program.

The Year 7/8 program focuses on building students' core skills and providing them with broad access to all eight Learning Domains. Year 7/8 also has a strong Pastoral Care program that focuses on developing strong positive relationships between students and their peers, between teachers and students and between our teaching staff and the parent and broader school community. Year 7 students and their team of teachers make use of an exclusive Year 7 area that ensures the transition into the college is student-focused, supportive and positive.

In Year 9, the program is focused both on continuing to develop students' core skills and on providing students with choice over their learning. The Year 9 program includes single-sex English and Maths classes that have proven very successful in recent years. The Year 9 program includes a combination of core and elective subjects that align strongly with Senior Schools Pathways and also builds links with the local community. Within the Senior School, students are able to access a broad range of Year 10 and VCE electives. Year 10 students are strongly encouraged to access VCE Unit 1 and 2 electives, whilst the Year 11 and 12 VCE Programs (including Vocation Major Units) cater to a broad range of pathways to ensure the individual needs of all students are met. VET Programs are available to students in Years 10, 11 and 12.

In recent years, the College infrastructure has undergone significant enhancement to cater to the increasing student population. The development of new year level halls has added to the state-of-the-art Design Centre and Language Centre, as well as the installation of multipurpose courts, playground equipment and the upgrading of the college environment to have a positive impact on our ability to meet student learning needs and on the culture of the college. Dromana College also prides itself on our relationships with external stakeholders and the extracurricular opportunities we offer our students. Partnerships with local organisations such as Monash University and feeder Primary Schools. Opportunities exist for students to participate in before and after-school Enhancement programs, and are integral to our success as an educational provider. An extensive camp and excursion program, including Japanese and Indonesian homestays, European cultural tours and trips to Cambodia as part of World Challenge, is further complemented by a wide range of Year Level, Outdoor Education and subject-specific camps that further enhance the educational experience and the holistic development of our students.

Of course, quality teaching staff is the most important factor in any classroom. Dromana College has an excellent reputation for attracting and retaining motivated and committed staff and for enhancing teacher capacities in the classroom and as leaders. There is a strong culture of distributive leadership and collaborative work practices to ensure that the needs of all Dromana College students are fully met.

**Philosophy and Values**

## Philosophy: Lessons come from the journey, not the destination

## Values: Dromana College is a caring and supportive learning community which promotes the values of:

### Respect, Integrity, Responsibility and Personal Best

## Purpose: "To provide effective learning for all students"

## 2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Dromana Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

<u>Universal</u>

Our whole of school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion are:

- maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents and carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- delivering a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE VM and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers using the Dromana Model of Effective Teaching and the Victorian Model of Teaching and Learning 2.0 instructional frameworks to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction ensures that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers adopting a broad range of shared teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting it to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling

- acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- providing students the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and peer support groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, year level coordinator, assistant principal and principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- welcoming all students to self-refer to the student wellbeing coordinator, school nurse, school chaplain, year group leaders, assistant principal and principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Respectful Relationships
    - Bully Stoppers
    - Safe Schools
- developing programs, incursions and excursions to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- creating opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- encouraging buddy programs, peers support programs
- putting measures in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

<u>Targeted</u>

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

- having a year group leader/coordinator for each year group; a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- supporting Koorie students to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our [insert name of any other school documentation you have in place outlining the school strategies to support Koorie students] for further information
- supporting our English as a second language students through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) program, and supporting all cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) students to feel safe and included in our school including through [insert any specific strategies you have in place to support CALD students]
- supporting learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through [insert any specific strategies or measures you have in place to support students from refugee background]

- providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and following the Department of Education (the department) policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQA+ students]
- supporting all students in Out of Home Care in accordance with the department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a learning mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- supporting students with a disability to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the department's policy on Students with Disability, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- ensuring wellbeing and health staff undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff applying a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- supporting students enrolled under the department's international student program in accordance with our legal obligations and department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program
- assisting all students from Year 10 and above to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- assisting students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Dromana Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with students and their parents/carers to talk about how best to help the students engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
    - school-based wellbeing supports
    - Student Support Services
    - appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or The Orange Door
    - re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student

- monitoring individual student attendance and developing Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    - with a disability
    - in Out of Home Care
    - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

These strategies, processes and practices at Dromana Secondary College are referenced from Department of Education guidelines found in the following:

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans
- Behaviour - Students
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Support Services

as well as to other department programs and services such as:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health and wellbeing toolkit
- headspace
- Navigator
- LOOKOUT

## 3. Identifying students in need of support

Dromana Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The student wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Dromana Secondary College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- Student Support Groups and Individual Education Plans
- [Amend to include other referral pathways]

## 4. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

## 5. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy/Student Code of Conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination is not tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Dromana Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the year level coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with department policy:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and Seclusion Policy

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The principal of Dromana Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

## 6. Engaging with families

Dromana Secondary College values the input of parents and carers, and we strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff Policy.
- providing parent/carer volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## 7. Evaluation

Dromana Secondary College collects data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that are assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Dromana Secondary College also regularly monitors available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

This policy is communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the department's policies at:

- Suspension process
- Expulsions - Decision

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following department policies and resources are relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Action Plan - Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

All College policies are available at https://dsc.vic.edu.au/policies/ and/or hard copy from school administration upon request.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| Policy last reviewed | September 2026 |
| Consultation | College Council |
| Approved by | Alan Marr, Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | September 2028 |